

compassionate conservatism, to expand the charitable deduction to non-itemizers, to provide a tax credit of up to 50 percent of the first \$500 for individuals, up to \$1,000 per couple, against State income or other taxes, to give permanent charitable contributions from IRA accounts for persons over the age of 59 without penalty, extend the proposed charitable State tax credit to corporations, raise the cap on corporate charitable donations, because the proposals of Governor Bush are another dynamic way to address this concern of how best to solve the social problems that are overwhelming many of our inner cities, our suburban areas and our rural areas, as well.

President Clinton the other night proposed the following initiatives: Allow non-itemizers to deduct 50 percent of contributions over \$500 a year when fully phased in, simplify and reduce the excise tax on foundations by eliminating the current two-tiered system, and also to increase the limit on deductions for donations of appreciated assets, such as stock, real estate, and art, to charity from 30 to 50 percent of the adjusted gross income, and to private foundations from 20 to 30 percent.

President Clinton's proposals are an important first step. I hope he expands his charitable proposal. I hope that this House, when we move what is most likely to be some sort of a tax package, will look at Governor Bush's proposals, we will look at President Clinton's proposals, we will consider the proposals that the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) have proposed, that we will look at the Give Act that I and over 20 other Members of Congress have proposed, because I do not think there is a single more important thing we can do to help rehabilitate our communities and families in this country than to get additional dollars into the hands of those who are sacrificing, who day-to-day are working in tutoring, in counseling in the schools, in housing rehabilitation, in drug rehab, in all sorts of outreaches to the families and children in this country who are hurting.

□ 1700

To the degree that in a tax package we ignore that, it will be on our heads. I really hope that our leadership and the Committee on Ways and Means will carefully consider these charitable tax proposals and include them in any tax package.

□

THE B.E.S.T AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I wanted to talk to the House tonight about the agenda which the Republican Conference is moving. We have worked closely with the White House and some

Members of the Democratic Caucus on the BEST agenda, B-E-S-T. It is kind of easy to remember if we keep it in mind.

B: Building up the military.

One of the big problems we have is we are still in a dangerous world, and although the Soviet Union has fallen, we can still see, if we have watched Russia and Chechnya, that Russia really has not changed. Their political system has, but their philosophy of being an aggressive nation certainly has not. And they have a lot of military nuclear weapons over there. The question is what are they doing with that nuclear arsenal? One of the things is they are selling it to renegade countries. We need to keep an eye on them.

Madam Speaker, we cannot disengage from the world military scene. The world is still an unstable place. There are too many Saddam Husseins and North Koreans out there.

Also, we lose lots of soldiers because of the deployments. From World War II until 1989, there were 11 deployments. But since 1989, there have been 33 deployments. And all we have to do as a Member, and I recommend to all of the Members of Congress to do this, they should go talk to some of the military posts and bases in their district and find out how the recruitment is doing and the reenlistment is doing. They are losing lots of good soldiers.

Another reason is, despite the Republican 4.8 percent pay raise that we passed in this Congress last year, there is still a 13 percent pay gap between military and civilian pay.

These things have to be addressed, so the "B" in BEST is to build up the military.

E: E is for education.

The idea behind that is to return education to the local control. Think, Madam Speaker, about those great classic teachers that we were able to grow up and experience in our educational careers. The teachers who were just commander of the ship when we went in their classroom. They may have had a few extra rules. They worked us hard and were disciplinarians, but they changed our lives. And if we got a B in their class, it was worth an A in half a dozen other classes because that teacher got the best out of us.

Madam Speaker, those teachers are rare these days because they are tired of the bureaucracy. Is somebody up on the sixth floor or the third office down to the right in the cubical telling teachers in Georgia and Illinois and in Maine and in California and Miami how to teach? Come on. There is not a bureaucrat that smart in our town.

Return education to the local control. Let the teacher in the classroom get the dollars. Let the teacher run the show.

The S in BEST: Saving Social Security.

Last year in his State of the Union address, the President said let us spend 38 percent of the Social Security sur-

plus on non-Social Security items. Actually, he said let us only save 62 percent, but doing the math, that would mean spending 38 percent of the Social Security surplus. That is not good enough.

We need to protect and preserve 100 percent of the Social Security surplus. Last year this Congress left town with \$147 billion in the surplus trust fund so that our loved ones can retire to an income that is there because of the money they put in it.

And the T is tax relief.

Every day another couple gets married and when they do, they get a bill, \$1400 for walking down the aisle together. We need tax relief for working America.

Madam Speaker, that is what it is. The BEST agenda.

There is one other angle in there that I want to say. Despite all the great prosperity and despite all the millionaires that have been made in the high-tech industry, one industry that has been left behind is agriculture. We need to reach out to America's farmers. Less than 2 percent of the population now feeds 100 percent of America, plus a great percentage of the whole world.

We need to make sure that our farm families are not left behind. How can they grow oats in Millen, Georgia, and compete against the foreign market that is subsidizing their farmer 30 percent in another country? They cannot do that. And yet we let our farmers get beat to death by foreign farmers whose governments subsidize them.

We need to try to close that. We need to help balance things. We need to have tough trade negotiations when we are negotiating multinational trade agreements. So these are things that we have worked on. We are going to continue to work on.

I believe that it is important for Democrats and Republicans to put aside partisan politics and, despite the hot air that is coming out of the cold State of New Hampshire, do what is best for America and do it here in Washington, D.C.

□

HOUSE AND SENATE CONFEREES SHOULD MEET IMMEDIATELY ON HMO REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, over the next hour, we will be hearing from lots of Members talking about not only the vote we took today on the motion to instruct conferees, but talk about the need for managed care reform and HMO reform. Because Congress, being out of session since late November, and having passed the managed care reform bill actually in early October, here we are February 1 and we are back in session with no hope in sight of the conference committee actually meeting. They have not met for 4 months.